



ARMY DELIVERS

10,000th Air Warrior and 1000th Electronic Data Manager

By Debi Dawson

BG Mark Brown, Program Executive Officer Soldier, presents SGT Justin Hutchinson, 236th Med. Evac. Co., with a commemorative plaque and coin for being the 10,000th recipient of the Air Warrior system.

Two 12th Cbt. Avn. Bde. Soldiers were honored with the presentation of special Army Aviation mission equipment achieving new fielding milestones December 14 in Germany.

BG Mark Brown, the Program Executive Officer for Soldier, and LTC Shannon Womack, the product manager for the Air Warrior program, presented with the 10,000th Air Warrior ensemble to SGT Justin Hutchinson and the 1,000th electronic data manager to CW2 Joshua P. Collins, both with the 236th Medical Evacuation Company.

The ceremony, recognizing the distribution of the 10,000 set of the specialized gear, included the issue of the Air Warrior system to 700 members of the 12th CAB stationed throughout Germany.

Hutchinson, a five-year veteran previously deployed to Kosovo and Kuwait, heads to Iraq in 2007 and says he feels better knowing that...“Anytime I need to leave the aircraft, I’ll have the proper gear.”

The new Air Warrior kit is a tailorable survival, escape and evasion system that includes the primary survival gear carrier, body armor tailored for maximum cockpit compatibility, signal and communications equipment, a first-aid kit, a survival knife, and a helmet with a maxillofacial protective shield.

Womack said the milestone fielding of the Air Warrior ensemble is significant because it marks the halfway point in the current program to issue 19,000 AW systems to all Army aircrew members.

The AW gear provides Soldiers better protection from bullets, chemicals, the weather and environmental hazards, while improving their mobility inside the cockpit.

Womack described Air Warrior as “an integrated ensemble that provides the Army aviator with all the survival and mission equipment gear needed to execute missions both in the cockpit and on the ground if

the aircraft happens to land or crash in a hostile environment or a remote area.”

When an aircraft does go down, usually the only thing the crew takes away from the cockpit is what they are wearing.

“We give them a personal survival gear carrier that has all the different items considered necessary. It’s got the signaling items, like a mirror, a radio, and a strobe light. It provides the medical gear in case of injury,” Womack said.

“It’s also has an integrated extraction harness this is worn and available if needed. We provide him with a modular holster so he can carry his 9mm defensive weapon with him,” he said.

The electronic data manager (EDM) is a small computer that aviators wear on their leg and is a key component of the Air Warrior.

It features pre-mission route and threat planning, as well as GPS moving map capability, allowing aircrews to quickly plan missions and react to mission changes while in-flight.

Collins, a pilot assigned in support of the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, is responsible for the safety of his crew on MEDEVAC missions at home station and away at remote sites.

“I think it’s going to give us an added level of safety, increasing our situational awareness, and having information more accessible,” Collins said. “It appears to be very user-friendly, very simple icons, push button, touch screen, very easy to get to.”

Additionally, the EDM is integrated with the Blue Force Tracking-Aviation (BFT-A) system.

“It gives the aviator a moving map and shows situational awareness information like where buddies are on the battlefield and whether the enemy is,” Womack said.

He explained that if aviators are out of range of the



CW2 Josh Collins, a UH-60 pilot, became the 1,000th Army aviator to receive an electronic data manager in Germany on Dec. 14.

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radios, they can still communicate through the BFT-A satellite system.

The EDM can also upload technical manuals for referencing if maintenance needs to be done on the aircraft remotely without having to rely on paper manuals. “It takes paper maps and acetate overlays out of the cockpit,” Womack said.

The EDM is fielded to units before they deploy so that they learn how to use the equipment, how to maintain it, how to fit it, and how to service it in the field. “Our goal is to have one EDM per pilot,” Womack said.

The success of the Air Warrior system is interesting other service customers as well.

“We’re getting indications that the program is so vibrant and effective it may go beyond equipping our own Army,” Brown said, “The Navy has bought the system because they liked it so much, as well as our Australian allies. And there may be more to come.”

Additional information on the Air Warrior program is available at <http://peosoldier.army.mil/>.



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